

Message Text

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SUBJ: SHAKE-UP IN RPP LEADERSHIP

1. A CONFLICT WHICH HAS BEEN BREWING FOR SEVERAL MONTHS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) SPILLED OVER INTO PUBLIC VIEW MARCH 8 WITH THE RESIGNATION OF THE TWO DEPUTY SECRETARIES GENERAL FROM THE PARTY CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD. THE BASIC CONFLICT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BETWEEN TWO FACTIONS LED BY PARTY SEC GEN ORHAN EYUBOGLU AND (NOW FORMER) DEPUTY SEC GEN DENIZ BAYKAL. PRIMARY REASON FOR THE CONFLICT BETWEEN EYUBOGLU AND BAYKAL APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN TACTICAL AND PERSONAL DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN IDEOLOGICAL ONES. THE EYUBOGLU FACTION IS, HOWEVER, GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE THE CONSERVATIVE FACTION OF THE RPP WHEREAS BAYKAL HAS TENDED TO BE IDENTIFIED MORE WITH THE LEFT WING. (BAYKAL HAS NEVER BEEN ASSOCIATED, HOWEVER, WITH THE "EXTREMIST"

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LEFT SUCH AS SULEYMAN GENÇ AND SUKRU KOC.)

2. AS NOTED ABOVE, THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS HAS BEEN BREWING FOR SOME TIME. BAYKAL AND HIS GROUP, WHICH INCLUDES SOME OF ECEVIT'S CLOSEST PERSONAL ADVISORS, SUCH AS HALUK ULMAN, WERE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH TURAN GUNES WHO HAD BEEN FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT. THIS GROUP WAS KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS THE "POLITICAL SCIENCE JUNTA" AND WAS IDENTIFIED WITH AN INTELLECTUAL AND ACADEMIC APPROACH TO POLITICS. THE EYUBOGLU FACTION IN CONTRAST IS ASSOCIATED IN THE PUBLIC MIND WITH PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS AND IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE MUCH MORE PRAGMATIC. (EYUBOGLU HIMSELF IS A SOFT-SPOKEN, RELATIVELY PRIVATE AND QUIET FIGURE. HE HAS NEVER RIVALED BAYKAL IN HIS ABILITY TO ATTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION BUT HE HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN VERY EFFECTIVE IN CONTROLLING THE PARTY MACHINERY.)

3. ACCORDING TO MOST ACCOUNTS, THE DISPUTE BETWEEN EYUBOGLU AND BYAKAL CENTERED ON THE TACTICS TO BE USED IN OPPOSING THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT. EYUBOGLU HAS ALLEGEDLY INSISTED ON AN ALL-OUT EFFORT TO BRING THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT DOWN, WHEREAS BAYKAL WANTED THE PARTY TO REMAIN IN OPPOSITION AND PREPARE ITSELF FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN DIFFERENCES OF OPINION CONCERNING THE EXTENT OF THE CENTRAL PARTY CONTROL OF PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE BYUBOGLU FACTION PREFERRING STRONG CENTRAL DIRECTION.

4. THE CATALYST FOR THE SHAKE-UP WHICH OCCURRED MARCH 8 WAS AN ELECTION TO FILL A VACANCY ON THE 15-MAN CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD. THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD ARE ELECTED BY THE PARTY ASSEMBLY, AN ORGANIZATION WHICH CONSISTS OF 40 ELECTED MEMBERS PLUS A REPRESENTATIVE EACH FROM THE WOMEN'S AND YOUTH BRANCHES FROM 21 PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. A MEETING OF THE PARTY ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER , 1975 FAILED TO FILL THIS VACNACY BECAUSE OF A DEADLOCK BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS. FINALLY ON MARCH 7TH THE PARTY ASSEMBLY MET AND ELECTED THE CANDIDATE SUPPORTED BY EYUBOGLU BY A MARGIN OF TWO TO ONE.

5. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY BAYKAL CHOSE, AFTER HAVING LOST ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS ISSUE, TO FORCE A REAFFIRMATION OF HIS OBVIOUSLY INADEQUATE STRENGTH. NEVERTHELESS, DURING A CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MARCH 8, BAYKAL AND FOUR OF HIS SUPPORTERS (HALUK ULMAN, EROL CEVIKCE, ADIL CINEL AND TANKUT AKLIN) RESIGNED FROM THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD. ECEVIT REPORTEDLY TRIED VERY HARD TO CONVINCE BAYKAL TO RECONSIDER, BUT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. AT THAT POINT, THE OTHER DEPUTY SECGEN, MUSTAFA USTUNDAG, MINISTER OF EDUCATION

IN ECEVIT'S GOVERNMENT AND GENERALLY(BUT NOT CLOSELY) ASSOCIATED WITH BAYKAL ANNOUNCED THAT HE BELIEVED THE COMPLETE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD SHOULD RESIGN SO THAT NEW ELECTIONS COULD BE HELD AND HE SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION. SECGEN EYUBOGLU FOLLOWED SUIT. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER A MEETING OF THE PARTY ASSEMBLY WAS HELD AND A NEW CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD WAS ELECTED. BAYKAL, HIS FOUR SUPPORTERS AND USTUNDAG WERE NOT RE-ELECTED. THE SIX NEW MEMBERS ARE AHMET DURAKOGLU, FORMER FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTER HASAN ISIK (LONG-TIME POLITICAL RIVAL OF TURAN GUENS), SEMIH ERYILDIZ, KEMAL TABAK, CAHIT KARAKAS AND NADIR YAVUZKAN.

6. COMMENT: THE DUST HAS NOT SETTLED YET AND WE SHALL REFRAIN FROM MAKING FINAL JUDGMENT UNTIL WE HAVE TALKED TO SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SHAKE-UP. HOWEVER, CERTAIN THINGS ARE CLEAR. DENIZ BAYKAL, A VERY ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, YOUNG POLITICAIN WHO HAD BEEN ECEVIT'S FINANCE MINISTER (THE YOUNGEST FINANCE MINISTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC) HAD NOT DURING HIS METEORIC RISE SINCE FIRST BEING ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT IN 1973, PROTECTED HIS FLANKS. ON THE OTHER HAND, ORHAN EYUBOGLU, WHO HAS BEEN PARTY SECGEN SINCE 1973, HAS CLEARLY KEPT HIS FENCES MENDED AND MAINTAINED HIS CONTROL OF THE PARTY MACHINERY. INDIRECTLY, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER TURAN GUNES(LEADER OF THE POLITICAL SCINECE JUNTA), WHO HAD RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY ASSEMBLY IN LATE 1974 IN WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN A MISCALCULATED POWER PLAY, HAS ALSO LOST GROUND WITHIN THE PARTY. SPECULATION IS THAT TWO PARLIAMENTARIANS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH EYUBOGLU (ISTANBUL DEPUTY ALI TOPUZ AND IZMIR DEPUTY ALEV COSKUN) WILL REPLACE BAYKAL AND USTUNDAG AS DEPUTY SECGENS AT A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD MARCH 9. IT IS NOT CLEAR IF OR HOW THIS SHAKE-UPWILL AFFECT ECEVIT'S POSITON WITHIN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARTY. NONE OF THE MEMBERSOF THE NEW OR OLD EXECUTIVE BOARD COULD BE CONSIDRED TO BE ANIT-ECEVIT; HOWEVER, INSOFAR AS THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD BECOMES A MORE CONSERVATIVE INSTITUTION (WHICH NOW SEEMS TO BE THE CASE) THE IDEOLOGICAL SPLIT IN THE PARTY COULD BECOME MORE PRONOUNCED AND IN THIS SENSE WEAKEN THE PARTY AND THUS ECEVIT'S POWER. MACOMBER

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